Japanese lady adopts Cajun culture

By BERNICE ARDOIN
Family Features Editor

"I was only supposed to come here, meet my family, then return to Tokyo, but look! I'm still here," Rose Gullory said about her first visit to the United States, 35 years ago. Rose married Raymond Gullory, from Ville Platte, while he was stationed in Japan during the Korean War. They had their first child, Charles Ray, in Japan and later came to the United States.

She could speak very little English when she arrived here 35 years ago. "I was surprised to find many people couldn't speak English, only French," she recalled about her first experience with Cajun. "We couldn't speak although we tried to learn enough English so we could communicate," she grinned.

Rose was born in Tokyo, Tetsuka and Take Tanaka. Her father, Toshi, is deceased.

Rose recalls a lot of changes during those 35 years of living here. "One drastic change," she noted, "was the difference in living in a large city like Tokyo, and moving to a small community like Pine Prairie and Ville Platte."

"I find the people here are friendly, kind, understanding and more compassionate," she said after a brief pause. "I get close to people here and have learned more in this way."

Another major difference in the two countries, according to Rose, is self-discipline. "The children there have education was a must and it came first. When I was in school, there was no discipline," she said.

Rose has attended school after high school. "I did say 85 percent or more of the population attended college," she said.

When living here, Rose has been very active in church and civic organizations. She's been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary for over 30 years, and was a president of the American Legion Auxiliary. She was chairman of the Miss Ville Platte pageant, chairman of the Cotton Blossom festival, a volunteer for the Evangelical Parish Health Unit, and a volunteer for Sacred Heart Church.

Through her many years of serving at the parish library, Rose was able to meet many people.

"I'm glad I have my five children," she said after mentioning Raymond's death in 1997. "They give me a reason to stay here."

"She has six grandchildren, all living here in Evangelical Parish. Her daughter, Sue, is presently living in Little Rock, Arkansas. The others, all live not too far away," she smiled.

"When you're young, you are so busy, you don't really wonder where your place in life is. But when you're older, you begin to wonder," Rose said.

Rose later went to work for the Evangelical Parish Library, and Rose is still there today, 13 years later, and plans to retire in a few years.

She is the mother of five children: Charles, Raymond Reid, twins Joanne and Dianna, and one daughter Sue. In 1976, several groups here in the parish get together and helped to raise money for Rose to go back to Japan for a visit. "I'll never forget all those who contributed to my visit to Japan."

"I have been away so long, I felt like a stranger when I returned in Japan. I want to see my mother. During my visit, I realized my home was back here in Evangelical Parish," she admitted. "I still dream of one day going back to see my mother, who's now 84."

"Sometimes I'm not sure where I belong," she said in a saddened tone. "I guess I realized that when I visited home. It just wasn't the same."

It's very obvious that the United States and Japan are very different, but Rose noted the most drastic differences. "Education is very different. In the United States, children start school at age two. Sunday is the only day of the week the students have off from school and much studying is done on Sunday and on the day off. When I was in school," she recalled, "eleventh grade was the highest grade of high school." She also mentioned that almost everyone living there attends college to further their education. "Education is a priority there. People in Japan take everything seriously, especially education," she pointed out. "They (the students) have only one term beginning Aug. 22. Rose later decided to move to Ville Platte where she worked at the old hospital, on Main Street, for about a year. "I went to school at night to take a course in school, she said."

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JAPANESE MEMORABILIA - The many Japanese items displayed here by Rose Gullory are the same items to be used in the library display this week. The items include a Japanese armchair, porcelain Japanese doll, tea pot, dishes, kimono, obi, pure silk headband and pillow cases, chop sticks, and a small tray. (Gazette photos by Bernice Ardoin)